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ABSTRACT

A longitudinal study which focused attention on communication behavior of Native American students and interrelated data from overcultural norms, teacher observations, and student reflections was begun during fall semester of 1977 and continued through 1978-79 academic year at the University of Oklahoma. All subjects were Native American students enrolled in communication or university college courses designed for Native Americans. Data were gathered by instructors recording and discussing patterns of behavior they observed and creating situations in which students could collectively and privately respond to questions and statements about their observed or otherwise alleged behavior. Results are discussed in three sections: the first describes sets of classroom communication behaviors of Native American students observed; the second provides a comparison of classroom behavior with communication behavior in a variety of non-classroom settings; and the final section presents data obtained from administration of the PRCA scale and correlates those results with other findings. Based on the analysis, Native American students are urged to make choices consciously, allowing the student to gain maturity to cope with peer pressure to remain Indian and institutional pressure to adopt Anglo values. For teachers, suggested instructional strategies include: review cultural bases of instructional techniques; utilization of small group techniques; and change of attitude toward Native American students. (ERB)

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COMMUNICATION RETICENCE OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE CLASSROOM: A RECONCEPTUALIZATION AND APPROACH

By

Philip Lujan, William R. Kennan, L. Brooks Hill, and Larry W. Long*

The reticent behavior of Native Americans in the classroom has long stimulated the curiosity of teachers, students, and researchers. To the instructor of a class which entails active student participation, these behaviors are often perplexing and frustrating. Explanations are available, but questionably derive from culturally sensitive presumptions about the adequacies or inadequacies of the educational institutions and/or cultural groups involved. The results seldom provide the teacher useful guidance or a reliable point of departure. The purpose of this paper is not to rehash the controversies of earlier positions, but rather to introduce a recently begun longtitudinal study which focuses attention on communication behavior and which interrelates data from over-cultural norms, teacher observations, and student reflections. Drawing upon the diverse sources of data and focusing upon the pragmatic interaction potentiate a more valid and viable perspective.

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Rationale

Although other universities have equally large Indian enrollments, no other university can match the diversity of tribal affiliation and community background that is found at the University of Oklahoma. Between forty and forty-five different tribes, including several out-of-state tribes, are represented by students whose backgrounds vary from reservation or highly autonomous Indian communities to urban areas with only marginal tribal contact. The energy and resources of many faculty and officials of the University are committed to the welfare and development of these Indian students. However, the apparent result of the university experience for many Native Americans remains negative. A recent survey sponsored by the University showed that the attrition rate for Indian men and women combined is sixty-three percent (Carney, 1978). The drop-out rate for Indian women alone is an incredible seventy-eight percent. The survey further indicates a significantly lower grade point average for Native Americans; thirty-seven percent accumulate a grade point average of less than 2.0 on a 4 point scale. Overall, most Native American students at Oklahoma University do not complete even the first two years of college.

The attrition problem for Native American students is not limited to the University of Oklahoma; colleges and universities throughout the United States with large Indian enrollments experience similar problems. On a nationwide basis, McDonald (1978) estimates that the drop-out rate ranges as high as ninety-three percent. Many educators believe the drop-out problem is related

to the lack of an adequate educational background common to students from rural communities; of this group Native American students comprise a large percentage. Despite that pattern, however, another Oklahoma University study (Carney, 1979) unexpectedly revealed that the average Indian ACT score varied only one point from that of the average non-minority freshman, and that Native Americans do not perceive their college preparation to be significantly different from that of non-Indians. On paper, at least, Indian and non-Indian students seem to have a fairly even start. The overall negative response of Native Americans to college as reflected in their academic performance points out that a problem exists for which current programs are insufficient.

To determine the nature and scope of this educational problem, two distinct approaches are generally followed: One represents an institutional deficiency interpretation of the phenomenon and the other a person deficiency perspective. Both perspectives entail emotionally charged cultural bias, and neither perspective bases its position on an analysis of communication.

Native American scholars have often assumed a kind of "I'm OK, you're not OK" stance. They argue that the traditional educational environment has never come to grips with the "Indian problem," because educational institutions are generally unresponsive to the needs of Indian students (McDonald, 1978). Among the most important reasons advanced for the drop-out rate are institutional racism and cultural differences between the student and the institutions. Characterizing this attitude, La Fromboise, Dauphinais,

and Rowe (1978) argue that the current system "perpetuates racism and allows myths to go unchallenged" (p. 1). Accordingly, Bodner (1971) argues for an Indian orientation toward education; Corbett (1970) argues that the educational environment must reflect the Indian value system, and Forbes (1970) argues that one solution is to strengthen significantly Native American Studies Programs as a response to the total educational environment. In general, this group of scholars argues that the high attrition rate is not the fault of Indian students. Rather, it is the fault of educational institutions which have traditionally been unresponsive to minority needs. These writers suggest solutions which range from the retraining of teachers to the establishment of separate Indian educational facilities (Cf. Thompson, 1978).

Another group of scholars has assumed a different stance. Members of this perspective presume that educational institutions are fundamentally sound, but Indian students are perceived to lack certain traits, skills, or attitudes, and thus exhibit a higher probability of failure. These differences between Indian and non-Indian students presumably explain why so many Native Americans fail. For example, Query, Query, and Singh (1975) conducted a study of achievement motivation among Indians and non-Indians. One of the most vital questions of social concern in our society today, they contended, is "whether members from subcultural and or racial groups are motivated to the same extent for success as others" (p. 255). They conclude that Indian students are less motivated and thus perform at a lower level than their non-Indian fellows. Using different constructs, other research furthers

this person deficiency perspective: Middleton (1977) studied the profiles of mental abilities and found that Indians showed a significant variation from other ethnic groups. Cransberg (1976) reported that non-Indians are able to delay gratification longer than Indians; Echohawk and Parsons (1977) have demonstrated that Native Americans score higher on the externality dimension on a locus of control measure than do non-Indians, and Senior (1974) has found lower self-concept scores for Indians than for non-Indians. This body of data tends to exonerate educational institutions from complicity in the problem and places the blame primarily on Indian people and their culture.

Anyone who has taught Native Americans or who has observed those who do will attest that Indian students exhibit many of the characteristics noted in the literature; they infrequently participate in the classroom activities or discussions and when they do their performances are brief, barely audible, lack eye contact, and are generally reticent. However, as any ethnic minority student car attest, educational institutions usually presume the overcultural norms and implicitly, if not explicitly, suppress cultural differences. Thus, assigning causality to the institution or the people for such a multifaceted problem area is overly simplistic at best. A more likely perspective is that all parties and systems involved contribute variously to the problem, and that viable solutions will at this time necessarily focus on tactics and strategies for maximizing the usefulness of classroom interactions for all persons involved. Central to effective intercultural relations is managing the heterogeneity amongst participants; this

requires understanding of the differences and interactive strategies for mutually productive communication (Sarbaugh, 1979).

Research Design

The research design of this project reflects the complexity of the topic addressed and an attempt to implement ethnomethodological guidelines (Hill and Kennan, 1979; O'Keefe, 1979). To insure sufficient types of data to overcome potential bias necessitated gathering of data from the students and teachers in the classroom situation and in situations outside the classroom. To correlate these findings with overcultural norms demanded that we also secure data through established anxiety measures. To obtain sufficient quantity of data from subjects, logistic constraints dictated a multi-staged longtitudinal study in which data were accumulated each semester. The study began during the Fall semester, 1977, and currently continues; at the end of the academic year 1977-78, Lujan and Dobkins (1978) recorded some of their preliminary thoughts. All research has been conducted at the University of Oklahoma with the joint cooperation of the Department of Communication and the Native American Studies Program.

Generally categorized, the method of this project is field study in the natural setting; is longtitudinal at the end of its second year; and is at this time exploratory in its determination of categories and refinement of data gathering techniques. The following diagram provides a chronological overview of the development of this research design. From this overview one can more readily note the data gathering procedures, sources of subjects from whom the data were gathered, and the increased refinement and cross checks of procedures.

CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH DESIGN

FALL, 1977	SPRING, 1978	FALL, 1978	SPRING, 1979
DATA GATHERING Student Reflections Class discussions Exam questions Teacher evaluations Teacher Observations Intuitive	DATA GATHERING Student Reflections Class discussions Exam questions Teacher evaluations Teacher Observations Intuitive	DATA GATHERING Student Reflections Class discussions Exam questions Teacher evaluations Teacher Observations Intuitive Video-tapes Outside class Communication Anxiety Tests	DATA GATHERING Student Reflections Class discussions Exam questions Teacher evaluations Teacher Observations Intutive Video-tapes Outside class Communication Anxiety Tests
SUBJECTS *Comm 3810 - Native American Public Address (N = 15)	SUBJECTS +Univ College 2000 - Native Americans and Society (N = 32)	SUBJECTS *Comm 1113 - Principles of Comm--Native American Perspectives (N = 25) *Comm 3810 - Native American Public Address (N = 12)	SUBJECTS *Comm 1113 - Principles of Comm--Native American Perspectives (N = 15) +Comm 2313 - Native American Intercultural Comm (N = 18) +Univ College 2000 - Native Americans and Modern Society (N = 28)

*Courses team taught by Lujan and another member of the research team.
+Courses taught by Lujan alone.

The abbreviated nature of the diagram urges more specific explanation of our procedures. All subjects were Native Americans enrolled in Communication or University College courses designed for Native Americans. All courses were taught by Philip Lujan, Director of Native American Studies and co-researcher in this study. Four of the seven courses also included a second instructor and member of the research team. With the exception of the communication anxiety tests, males and females were undifferentiated in data collection. Because of the commonality and generality of responses, tribal identities are also undifferentiated. In subsequent semesters and after further category and method refinement, these variables will be isolated. Based on these methodological limitations, our current observations are tentative, but suggestive and directional.

During the Fall, 1977, semester, we began to gather unsystematic preliminary data regarding Native American student communication in the classroom situation. At this stage, we surveyed the existing literature on the problems of Native Americans in the college classroom and, under the influence of ethnomethodological guidelines (Wieder, 1974; Kennan, 1979), began the inductive categorization of manifestations of the problems in terms of communication behavior. To elicit data, the instructors (1) recorded and generally discussed patterns of behavior they observed; and (2) created situations in which the students could collectively and privately respond to questions and statements about their observed or otherwise alleged behavior. To secure the student responses, the instructors periodically asked groups of students to discuss these concerns

in class. On examinations, the instructors asked questions which provided the individual an opportunity to respond. At the end of the semester, students had an opportunity to react to instructor tactics and strategies on teacher evaluations. These same procedures were continued during the Spring semester, 1978. The data gathered provided some tentative categories and several questions about other research and conclusions. In a "thought piece" paper at the Speech Communication Association annual convention last year, Lujan and Dobkins (1978) reported our progress.

During the academic year 1978-79, we continued our inductive efforts along the same lines as the preceding year and expanded our procedures for data gathering. Now that we had some preliminary categories we began to gather data more systematically, but still flexibly to control imposition of overcultural expectations. The instructors video-taped approximately five hours of classroom communication activities each term. The tapes focus on small group discussions, dyadic interactions, and public speaking assignments. The instructors also began to gather intuitive, comparative data outside the classroom. At social and task-oriented events at the University and area pow-wows, the instructors and other members of the research team unobtrusively observed the communication behavior of some of the students. During this year, the instructors also began to administer communication anxiety measures, PRCA (McCroskey, 1970, 1978) and that of Burgoon (1976), to facilitate correlation of the student perceptions of anxiety with overcultural norms and amongst themselves.

Results

The results of this research project are reported and discussed in three sections. The first includes preliminary categories, which generally describe sets of classroom communication behaviors of the Native American students we observed. A second section provides a comparison of classroom behavior with communication behavior in a variety of non-classroom settings. A final section of results presents the data obtained from administration of the PRCA scale and correlates those results with the other findings.

Classroom Observations

The analysis of video-tapes and classroom observations resulted in five categories of communication behaviors which indicate the presence of speech apprehension among the subjects. These categories are tentative and have yet to be formally validated, but they do indicate general patterns of student activity with a special emphasis on communication behavior.

Complete Withdrawal.--One of the key difficulties involved in working with Native American students is simply getting them to participate. During the course of this project half of the total number of subjects failed to participate in various aspects of the study. This kind of withdrawal often entails a complete physical absence for several class meetings, appearing late for class meetings, or inexplicably leaving during class. Our experience also indicates that complete withdrawal is not particular to any type of student, regardless of sex, tribe, or grade level. Almost all of the students avoided classroom activities or facets

of the research project with at least one type of withdrawal. Absences were particularly conspicuous on days when assignments were due and especially if the assignments involved some sort of oral communication.

Non-Participation in Classroom Discussion.--The students observed in this study rarely participated in classroom discussions. This unwillingness included, for example, a reluctance to volunteer or ask for information and to volunteer or ask for opinions. As with the previous category, this phenomenon is not mediated by the quality of a student's work, sex, or tribal membership. On several occasions the instructors presented to the classes material which was clearly false and contradicted previous discussions and materials contained in the text. On no occasion did students contradict that information or ask for clarification of it. When confronted with this fact students responded variously. Generally, they noted their awareness of the error, but that they did not wish to cause trouble and conflict.

Refusal to Respond to Direct Requests.--Native American students frequently declined to answer direct questions or to perform various in-class activities even when asked directly by the instructor to do so. There is no hostility or conflict implied here. The students in this study simply avoided public participation in the classroom setting, even to the point of a polite but direct refusal. Students were assigned several activities to be performed in class. On several occasions students attended class, but refused to participate even when threatened

with a failing grade. This pattern of refusal extended to written assignments as well. Students often refused to turn in written assignments, even when the instructors were aware that the student had completed the work.

Time Spent Communicating.--Even when the students agreed to respond, their comments were brief. For example, our students were asked to prepare a four-to-six minute speech as the final assignment for the Communication 1113 course. Outlines and supporting materials were checked before the final presentations. Despite lengthy preparation on the part of students, speeches were reduced in length by nearly half. Although public speeches for novices are often shorter than planned, the abbreviation was more common and extreme than encountered with non-Indian students. Nearly every type of communication activity was similarly abbreviated.

Eye Contact.--Indian students in the classroom preferred to avoid eye contact with instructors and with each other. This activity, as with the others, was observed to affect almost all of the students, and it was observed to occur in every in-class setting, regardless whether the instructor was Indian or non-Indian.

Collectively these sets of behaviors indicate speech apprehension. They indicate a student who is unwilling to communicate openly with peers or with instructors. The uniformity with which these behaviors occur cuts across tribal membership, sex, and grade performance, suggesting some pan-Indian outlook regarding

the educational setting. However, the nature of this response and its cultural basis remains unclear. The following results and discussion attempt to address these issues.

Non-Classroom Observations

The majority of the studies regarding Native American classroom behavior presume that the behaviors observed in educational settings represent relatively stable traits. These characteristics, once identified, are often applied as a description of Indian students without particular regard for such mediating elements as situation, participants, and purposes. After the first year of this project, we began to suspect that the educational environment uniquely elicits particular feelings and responses from the students. In one respect our observations outside the classroom, which began in the second year of our research, were designed as a test of the "trait" approach, to provide a situational comparison to determine how typical or atypical classroom behaviors are when matched with communication behavior outside the educational environment.

Students were observed in a variety of situations, at work and at play. Some of these situations were physically away from the university and some, which were extra-curricular, were conducted on the University of Oklahoma campus. The students were observed in dyads, small groups, and larger gatherings. In all these situations, Native Americans composed the majority of the participants, making the occasions primarily intracultural, rather than intercultural in nature.

The difficulty associated with obtaining data in non-classroom settings is great. A non-Indian does not work as an unobtrusive observer in a situation which is predominantly Indian. Indian people are well aware of the implications of participation in research and are well known for their willingness to deceive investigators. Consequently, the validity of our observations was of continual concern (Trimble, 1979). By appearing regularly and discretely recording observations, we could operate freely and without challenge. Our presumptions were that observing Indian students over long periods of time would sensitize them to our presence and that increasing the number of observations would distinguish the patterns of communicative behavior.

Pow-wows were one of our primary sources of non-classroom observations and illustrate our general approach. Pow-wows serve as rather significant social, political, and religious events for Native Americans. They occur with a high degree of regularity from early spring to late fall. As with any social event the structure of pow-wows, their components, and dynamics are complicated (Phillips, 1978). Without careful and repeated observations and without the assistance of knowledgeable participants, the actions and activities which comprise a pow-wow can easily remain mystifying. To obtain non-classroom observations, the authors spent the summer months frequenting the weekly procession of pow-wows which attracted many of our students and their families. We became familiar to many pow-wow regulars and made acquaintances who were invaluable in helping us to interpret

the enormous amount of data available to us. University activities of the Native American Studies Program also provided non-classroom sources of observations; our participation at pow-wows made us more socially acceptable at university activities as well.

Our non-classroom findings surprisingly contradicted our classroom observations. Indian students appeared to be generally gregarious and even boisterous within an Indian setting, particularly where non-Indians were insignificant features of the situation. Our classroom observations suggested that the five categories of communication behaviors were relatively common patterns of behavior and that variations were merely differences in frequency and intensity rather than different types of behaviors. These observations were simply not characteristic of the students in non-classroom settings; instead, the Indian students exhibited a wide variety of non-reticent behaviors, depending on the requirements of the situation. The categories of behaviors observed in the classroom failed to describe the communication activities exhibited by the students in non-classroom environments.

Another thought-provoking feature of these observations is that the widest variety of behaviors were observed in situations where few or no non-Indians were present. For example, a group of Indian students alone exhibit a wide variety of communication behaviors. However, if non-Indians are inserted into the setting, the number of and variety of behaviors decrease. Thereafter, the larger the number of non-Indians and the more control they assume over the situation, the smaller the number and variety of behaviors exhibited by Indian students. Thus, our observations

suggest that when non-Indians assume a dominant role in any setting the behaviors exhibited by Native Americans come to more nearly approximate those observed in the classroom.

These results indicate that Indian students, like most people, manipulate their communication behaviors as a response to particular settings. Thus, it makes little sense to assign the status of "trait" to the behaviors we observed in the classroom. Rather, it seems more likely that Indian students are responding based on their perceptions of the particular setting and their relation to it. The key concern thus becomes a clearer understanding of the situational interpretation by Indian students which results in those reticent behaviors.

Anxiety Measures

Although situational considerations apparently form the basis for classroom behaviors, we were concerned with the apprehensive characteristics of those behaviors. Even a casual examination of the categories observed in the classroom suggests the presence of apprehension. The decision to administer the PRCA scale was dictated not by a desire to demonstrate cultural differences in response to this scale, but rather to determine if scale results would suggest any explanations of the reticent behaviors we observed in the classroom. The anxiety measure by Burgoon was also utilized and produced similar results; because this measure lacks national norms, we chose to report only the PRCA results.

The results of the data analysis are as surprising as they are enlightening. Several statistical comparisons were calculated within the subject population and with population norms for non-Indian students established at the University of Oklahoma. Descriptive results of the PRCA scale are reported in Table I.

TABLE I

MEAN	59.923	STANDARD ERROR	0.920	STD DEV	4.960
VARIANCE	21.994	KURTOSIS	0.568	SKEWNESS	-0.616
RANGE	20.000	MINIMUM	48.00	MAXIMUM	68.00

A z-test was calcualted comparing the mean score and standard deviation of the subject population with the population norms ($\bar{X}$=60, S=10). The comparison of means confirmed what even a visual comparison indicates, i.e., the means were not significantly different, even given the large difference in deviation scores. A comparison of the deviation scores via a deviation test did, however, achieve significance ($F=4.55$, $df=25,\infty$, $p < .01$). A t-test comparison between male and female Indian subjects did not achieve significance ($p < .17$). Table II provides the statistics for this comparison.

TABLE II

	N OF CASES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	STANDARD ERROR	T VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	PROB
MALES	9	60.44	3.206	1.069	1.40	23.28	0.173
FEMALES	17	59.118	5.219	1.266			

The results of the PRCA are of particular interest. Although our sample size is insufficient, our exploratory results indicate that Indian students are no more apprehensive than non-Indians, but they respond much more uniformly than non-Indians. These results are surprising because they contradict the behaviors observed in the classroom. They are enlightening in at least two respects: First, the small range of scores and the small deviation scores indicate a uniform interpretation of the scale and probably of the educational environment as well. This finding is corroborated by the limited number of categories observed in the classroom. Thus, whatever the basis for the behaviors, they seem to be uniformly accepted. Second, these results suggest that classroom behavior is most likely not the result of any particular feelings of apprehension. Rather, they are probably elicited as a result of some interpretation of the situation accepted by most Indian students regardless of sex, tribe, or grade standing. The scale results, plus the results of observations in the non-classroom environment, provide support for this notion.

Implications

These results are not easily explained. What must be reconciled is the behavioral expression of what could be interpreted as speech apprehension, on the one hand, and the absence of it as measured by the PRCA scale and non-classroom behavior, on the other. These results suggest that classroom behavior is a situational response. If so, then two difficult questions must be addressed: First, what forms the basis for classroom behavior? And, second, how do the student and instructor cope? The answers to these

questions are difficult, because, given a situational explanation, one can no longer take refuge in either a person or institutional deficiency explanation.

In providing an explanation for this apparent contradiction three key points must be kept in mind: First, the classroom is a situation involving intercultural communication. Second, the classroom and total educational environment represent a context in which assimilation occurs, that is, where Native Americans learn to become non-Indian. Third, Native American college students, like other students, are seeking a sense of self-identity. However, their sense of awareness is drawn from tribal affiliation rather than from the non-Indian educational environment. Because Indian students draw a sense of identity from outside the university environment, they seek support and identification with tribal associations.

Given these observations, Indian students in a non-Indian educational setting encounter strong conflict in their quest for self-identity, which for Native Americans must be primarily conducted outside the educational environment. This fundamental conflict creates a dilemma for Indian students: Active participation in the classroom implies assimilation into non-Indian culture. Accordingly, participation, education, and assimilation mean that the student somehow becomes less Indian. In fact, the students in this research project were continually concerned about how they would be perceived by their classmates, relatives, and other acquaintances at home after their education was completed.

These feelings centered around the notion that somehow education mediates Indianness and can adversely affect relations with their primary community.

This conflict between education and Indianness results in a situational response designed to cope with the educational environment. We can describe this situational response as a strategy of interactional avoidance. Its purpose is to somehow maintain a balance between education and Indianness. Its objective is to allow the student to survive in the educational institution by remaining aloof and separate from the activity of becoming educated. By avoiding interaction, Native Americans can maintain their Indian identity by remaining isolated from the educational process. Thus, they hope that this strategy helps them to avoid assimilation and simultaneously remain in the institution. If the strategy works, they can avoid resolving the conflicts about self-identity until they finish their program. Too often the strategy leads to dropping out. In either case, the use and implications of the strategy are poorly understood by all parties involved.

These reticent classroom behaviors are a revealing, complex repertoire of behavior patterns selected by Indian students as a means of resolving the dilemma we have identified. The present study attempts to characterize and reconcile the seeming contradictions found in the data, and operates from a communication perspective which avoids the limitations imposed by either the person or institutional deficiency orientations. Subsequent discussion recognizes the complex interface between the person

and institutional deficiency models. If classroom participation or management evolves from an "either-or" stance on these perspectives, ineffective strategies will likely result. By focusing on communication behaviors and attributes of the "person," teaching methods will reflect the differential levels and types of achievement needs, motivations, and cultural influences among Indians and non-Indians. Likewise, the institutional perspective calls attention to communication activities, behaviors, and attitudes that are inherent to and promulgated by the institution. Through the study of communication behavior, we can survey, investigate and interpret the interface without limiting our generalizations to an either/or dichotomy. Although the implications are complex, and at times vague, the position offered provides a basis for intercultural understanding and research that seeks to encompass both the person and institutional deficiency models.

Like most explanations, however, this integrative, communication-based approach raises more questions than it resolves. For example, what can account for the uniformity of acceptance of the interactional avoidance strategy regardless of tribe, sex, or grade standing? How is the strategy transmitted? Who imposes this dilemma, the student, the tribe, or the teacher? What modifications are made in this strategy in other intercultural settings? These questions, and others, require careful systematic consideration in order to refine our understanding of the classroom setting. For this report, however, we will specifically consider two basic sets of implications: What does this study now

imply for the student? What advice does it provide to the teacher.

To the Student

Some attempts have been made to formulate a coping strategy for Native American students themselves; these strategies, however, generally reflect an institutional or personal deficiency orientation (Thompson, 1978). The institutional deficiency interpretation emphasizes relevant Native American culture curriculum content and sensitivity on the part of instructors to Native American culture. The personal deficiency model is suggestive of remedial and behavior modification programs. Before moving to the implications of an integrated perspective for students, two items should be discussed.

First, both deficiency models emphasize knowledge of Native American culture. If the educational process is to be changed, hindrances to Native Americans must be identified. Similarly, if Native Americans are to be changed, behavior which hinders acceptance of the educational process must be identified. Thus, strategies which neglect the problems of "Indianness" or which neglect the subtleties of intercultural relations are destined to failure.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, both models reinforce the already passive, non-involved nature of the Native American students. Whoever is at fault, the message is clear that students are somehow not actively involved in the solution. Therefore, students must be impressed with the need for an active participatory role in their education. Students must become explicitly

aware of the alternatives and dilemma they face. They must be afforded an opportunity to choose for themselves a coping strategy that balances personal identity needs and peer group pressure to remain Indian with the demands for behavior change necessary for educational success.

Two limited approaches to education seem presently available to students. Both alternatives are of an either/or nature. Students may adopt an approach which might be characterized as preservation of Indianness at all costs. Such a student will seek to conform to and enforce behavior which reflects a hostility and begrudging acceptance of the minimum social behavior necessary to acquire an education. If the classroom is the danger point of losing Indianness, then interaction with it is minimized. Academic marginality is viewed as a positive indication of Indianness. These students cultivate those experiences which they feel will not compromise their Indianness. Absenteeism, ambivalence and extended partying are only part of the expected behavior. Of course, all who do not conform are "turning into a white man" or becoming less Indian. Although realistic potential is seriously diminished, one can find a ready reinforcement for their Indianness.

At the other polarity, a Native American can totally ignore the behavior of their Indian peers and adopt the behavior of non-Indian students. Such a student will often become a social isolate: This person will be rejected by their more "militant" counterparts; and although accepted by others, this person will also have difficulties establishing a social niche with non-Indians. This approach will, however,

maximize the student's chance for academic success. The hard line often adopted by Indian students concerning Indianness may provide the impetus to push those Indians that choose this type of success further away. Here again, we confront a paradoxical situation: Those who seek to preserve Indianness at all costs often intimidate or alienate other Indians, which, in turn, restricts educational potential and further depletes the number of capable and knowledgeable Native American leaders and resource people.

A reasonable, but naive, compromise seems to surface: To take the best from the white world and hold onto the best of the Indian world is overly simplistic idealism. Advocated in the past, this viewpoint has produced little success. The first problem with this approach is a naive presumption that those choices about what is best can be made in a neutral environment. The environment, however, is not neutral! Secondly, this approach implies that one is able to determine and assimilate a shopping list of varied behaviors without some sort of philosophical cohesiveness and consistency. Finally, this approach implies that the best of both worlds will somehow produce a life in which nothing is sacrificed and everything is gained; given the social realities of both the Anglo and Indian worlds, this is impossible.

Realistic alternatives are available, and students are capable of making choices. However, with each choice, there are clear costs and trade-offs involved. No Indian students will be able to evade the consequences of their choices. Therefore, they should be made in the most conscious manner possible. This will allow

the student to gain the maturity to cope with peer pressure to remain Indian and institutional pressure to adopt Anglo values. Above all, the student must not remain the schizoid subject of competition between two cultures. The illusion of non-participation as a successful coping strategy must also be eliminated. Whatever the strategy chosen, only active participation by the students will insure genuine choice and further a successful psychological and social accomodation of that choice.

To the Teacher

Specifying a recipe of do's and don'ts for instructors becomes overly simplistic and potentially counterproductive. Three general instructional strategies, however, suggest some specific behaviors: (1) review of cultural bases of instructional techniques; (2) utilization of small group techniques; and (3) teacher attitudes toward Native American students.

Review of Cultural Bases of Instructional Techniques.--As with other behavior, teachers develop culturally based instructional techniques which are unquestionably employed in intercultural classroom situations. The teacher must examine any techniques for cultural presuppositions and adapt them appropriately. One specific example we encountered is especially applicable to the more general problems addressed in this study.

Perhaps as a "cultural reflex," Anglo instructors try to deal with Native American students individualistically. An instructor, for example, might identify a particular bright student who shows potential, but whose behavior is consistent with his apparently less able Indian peers. Singling out one or two

individuals for individual encouragement and attention may seem logical, but is not advisable. The inadvisability of such an approach is also supported by another recent study (Carroll, 1978). The purpose of this study was to test the common belief among Haskell College instructors that the non-traditional Native American students, usually those from urban areas, are the achievers, and the traditional students, usually from reservations, are the non-achievers. Subjects were the 546 entering freshmen in the fall of 1975. The study results supported the hypothesis, but the results also provided the following: "Superior students were even more sensitive to peer norms than their less academically qualified classmates. Better students went on disruptive and extended sprees of drinking parties, a very important part of Haskell student life, and felt they must prove their Indianness by not achieving too highly in the classroom" (p. 14). Thus an individualistic approach may only serve to exacerbate the student's identity conflict and result in increased withdrawal behavior. The Anglo instructor will, of course, be mystified by the reaction to their well-meaning attempt to help and will have their feelings of negativity toward Indian culture reinforced.

Utilization of Small Group Techniques.--Previous research consistently indicates significant differences between Indians and non-Indians relative to self-esteem and internal and external loci of control. Martin (1978) reports that differences begin to surface at approximately the fourth grade. He indicates that

Indian and Anglo children do not significantly differ in their developmental level of self-esteem until the junior high school years. At that level, the Indian children are significantly lower than white children in terms of self-esteem, and this difference persists throughout the high school grade levels. Concerning the development of locus of control, both Indian and white children tend to become more internal with age; however, white children perceive themselves as having more control over their actions than do Indian children. These differences suggest a concomitant awareness of the Indian students of the dilemma regarding Indianness and the Anglo classroom; interactional avoidance is a seemingly viable alternative, especially when reinforced by Indian peers.

Strategies for classroom management should incorporate methods aimed at reducing the negative impact of differential levels of self-esteem and locus of control evidenced in heterogeneous groups. Even if the Indian student's repertoire of classroom communication behaviors is "narrower" than those of the non-Indian, our observations suggest that personal differences do not adversely affect attainment of task-related group goals when the teachers are not directly involved in the group activities. Likewise, when Indian students are placed into class "sub-groups" during classroom-related activities, interaction levels increase and behavioral manifestations of communication apprehension are reduced. Thus, classrooms composed of heterogeneous cultural backgrounds and those which are primarily Indian should maximize the use of small groups as a vehicle for teaching subject matter.

Small group settings can capitalize upon differences and create conditions conducive to resolving intercultural "conflicts" (Osborn, 1974). Teacher workshops should, therefore, emphasize the use of small group techniques as a delivery system for curriculum-related subject matter.

Teacher Attitudes Toward Native American Students.--Although a set of viable classroom strategies is important, the instructor's attitudes and perceptions of Native Americans are equally important. One misleading temptation is for instructors to imagine themselves indispensable for the students' resolution of educational problems, but with Native Americans the identity conflict with the educational process may ultimately transcend both classroom strategy and the instructor. This realization of dispensability and reduced importance may lead the teacher uncritically to form defensive negative attitudes about the students.

Another ominous danger lies in the presumption that knowledge and appreciation of Indian culture will in itself provide the necessary basis for an instructor to establish a more positive relationship with Native American students. When this positive result does not occur, the instructor may develop self-doubt about teaching ability or generate negative perceptions of Indian students. Given human nature, the latter will probably be more prevalent and may actually be a "natural" result of the first. For various reasons, Indian people have often perceived a negative attitude toward Indians by teachers (Shaughnessy,1978). Native Americans and non-Indians alike have identified this as confirmation that racism on the part of teachers creates the "turned off" Native American

student. Thus, the argument continues, if racism is the problem, then a greater appreciation of Indian culture should be a cure. However, what th[illegible] line of thought and perception may be addressing is not racism, but the realistic, defensive reactions of instructor's negative classroom experience with Indian students. Anyone teaching will attest to the difficulty of maintaining a positive teaching image in the face of student indifference.

Training programs that have as their goal an abstract appreciation of Indian culture will do little to alter the concrete negative classroom experience of teachers. The emphasis should be placed on an instructor gaining an appreciation for the students' more general identity conflict with Anglo education. This may impersonalize student behavior so that an instructor will not interpret non-participatory behavior as a reflection of teaching ability and will obviate the need for negative attitudes which protect the teacher's own self-concept. Useful teacher training programs should identify the highly subjective elements which often provide the objective evidence of negative perceptions of Native American classroom behavior. For instance, sitting at the front of the class, classroom participation, regular attendance and nonverbal indications of interest are only a few of the many indicators on both a conscious and unconscious level of a good student. But student perceptions of how teachers react to the opposites of these "desired" behaviors are equally important indicators of the potential of that learning environment. Recognizing these variables and their influence can lead the instructor to better selection of instructional strategy, greater sensitivity

to the crucial identity problem, and more productive cultivation of positive attitudes by students and teachers.

Conclusion

This paper introduced a longtitudinal study of the reticent classroom communication behavior of Native American students at the University of Oklahoma. The low level of class participation and related drop-out rates provide a powerful justification to continue this research at not only our university, but others as well. Avoiding the pitfalls of deficiency approaches to these concerns, this project focused on communication behaviors and attempted to integrate results from other perspectives. The research design necessarily qualifies and limits our results. At this time we underscore the exploratory nature of the project, but equally emphasize the suggestive directions our results indicate.

From classroom and non-classroom observations, student reflections, and communication anxiety measures, we produced data which urge reexamination of the reticent behavior of Indian students in the classroom. We now believe the reticence primarily reflects a strategy of interactional avoidance designed to help the students cope with an identity dilemma regarding their Indianness. With this belief as a touchstone, our rather speculative discussion addresses several implications for the student, the teacher, and subsequent research. The questions which surfaced and the reconceptualization of the central problem are the potential contribution of the paper and the point of departure for continuation of the research project.

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